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AN EPISTLE

FOR TRUE

Love, Unity & Order, &c.

Dear Friends;

WHOM the Lord hath called out of the World's Ways and Manners, and chosen to himself, and found faithful according to the Proportion of Faith, and Measure of his Grace received, how to walk, Oh! let us hold fast that which we have received, that none may take our Crown: Oh! let us keep to our first Love, let us do our first Works, and be rightly zealous for the Lords Honour; and so with a good Conscience towards God, and in the sweet Spirit of Peace, seeking good one toward another, as good Examples and wholesome Paterns in our Practices. Oh! let us keep our good Order in the Truth, and Unity of the Spirit, even as we received of Christ Jesus in the beginning, that we should walk in the Light, *1 Joh. 1.7.* as he is in the Light (so shall we have fellowship one with another) which *light* is one in us all, & the one only true & living Way, leading to the Knowledge and living Obedience of the one, true and living God, that in his own living Spirit of Truth, we might Worship him, and in all wholesome Service hold forth his Holy & Reverend Name to be One in us all, who are gathered into it, serving the Lord with one Heart, one Soul, one Mind and one Consent. — And in the beginning of our Day, you that were then born and brought forth in the Truth, you know the Harmony of our Unity was our Beauty and Comeliness, yea, our Strength and Compleatness, so far as we had obtained then; and so 'tis now, blessed be the Lord, can we with one Heart say, who by his heavenly Power have been from

the beginning kept upon his Everlasting Foundation of true Unity, held in his Spirit, which is the Bond of our Peace, to this very Day and Time, in which the Lord hath suffered Blindness, in part, to happen to some, through their own Neglect of Watchfulness, and declining their first Love by the Enemy's Subtilty prevailing, who came out amongst us, and had a part in the Belief and Discovery of the Way of Truth; but now, some only have the Sheeps clothing, and others have lost that too, who through a prejudiced Mind are alienated from that Unity of Spirit and Bond of Peace, in which we keep our wholesome Practices, which we have received in the Unity and Order of the Gospel of Peace, and Truth of Christ Jesus, in the fellowship of the Spirit, in Bowels of Mercy, being like-minded, and of one accord, in whatsoever things
 2 Phil. 1. 4. are True, Just, Honest, and of good Report; not that we should think of them only, but be in the Practice of them, (as we are) and feel the God of Peace with us therein, who are confirmed in the Testimony of Christ Jesus, the one
 1 Cor. 1. 6. & Guide, Way and Rule we are to walk after, where
 10. all speak one thing, that there be no Dissention amongst us, but to be knit together in one Mind and in one Judgment; this we have received of Christ Jesus, our Lord, King and only Law-giver, that we might walk so in subjection to his Rule and Government, that all things might be done Decently and in Order; for our God is the God of Order, in all the Churches of his Saints, and not the God of Confusion, blessed be his Name; but to our burden and grief, we find among some, a contrary Spirit that will not subject to Unity in wholesome Practices amongst us, and that will needs interpose to destroy Unity in some places, and obtrude itself to confound our wholesome Order and Practices received amongst us, as a Church and People. And through this contrary Spirit, and prejudiced Mind, the Accuser of the Brethren is broken out, under a specious pretence, crying out, *Liberty of Conscience*, *Liberty of Conscience*, in opposition to those needful, convenient and wholesome Practices exercised amongst us, in outward things, to which we are called, as a People that are distinguished from the World's dark Ways and Corrupt Manners, in keeping our Consciences void of Offence towards God and Man, in keeping both in the Power and Form of Godliness.

Now that the Simple may not be ensnared, nor the Weak unstable minded deceived, nor the Unwatchful at unawares overtaken, through the crafty Insinuations of this accusing, opposing, dividing Spirit, that is at work in this our day, to confound Order, against the peaceable Government of Christ, amongst his People; therefore in Duty to the Lord, and to clear my Conscience, for the sake of those before-mentioned, are these few Lines writ; Wherefore in Humility of Soul, as before the Lord, I beseech you, tender Ones, in seriousness, and fear towards God, weigh the Matter: This Dividing, Accusing, Prejudicial Worker, would introduce a Belief, *That an Apostacy is entring, and we are gone from the Beginning, or first Principle, and the Power lost; and new Forms are setting up, and Imposition on Consciences, and the like: And amongst whom is all this,* say they; *but amongst us who are in Unity of Spirit, both in Faith and Practices,* with sincere mind towards God, are preserved in subjection, peaceably in Unity, and wholesome comely Order that speaks forth our God to be the God of Order; and 'tis amongst these, and such that they imagine this Fearful Imposture, and Arbitrary Rule, imposing Prescriptions and Laws on the tender Consciences of the Weak, is now gotten up to Exercise, and so the Liberty of the tender Conscience is lost: And you say, They are entangled with a yoke of Bondage again, who would divide the Heritage of God at this day. Pray Friends, let us in this consider whether these in this Blindness, which God hath suffered through their prejudiced Mind, justly to happen in them, by which are they not putting Darkness for Light and Light for Darkness, while they are striving in the stiffness of their Wills to rule, placing their own Wills for Conscience, and would have a Liberty therein, which Christ never set free to any that are in a Perverse, Gain-saying, Opposing, Willful Spirit, void of the Reason of Truth, and the Fellowship that is in it, and so are led by a Mis-guided Conscience; for we never understood that Conscience to be rightly guided, that was not renewed and regulated by the Light of Christ Jesus, which is one in all Consciences, and leads into the Sameness of Mind, not only in Faith, but also in sound Judgment and Practice (and so the Testimony of Christ Jesus hath been confirmed in us) the true Rectifier and Guide of the Conscience void of Offence; but now where Self-will is put for Conscience,

1 Cor. 1. 6.

is sensibly felt to be a gross Mistake. And such are (in Christian Charity) to be pitied and better informed, and indeed much Travel hath been for that, so that the Mis-led in a contrary Judgment might be helped and reduced back into Unity and our peaceable Fellowship, in our wholesome Practices, in the outward Affairs of Truth; but that which adds to our Sorrow, that though they still cry, *The tender Consciences*, yet woful Experience demonstrates it far otherwise, where Prejudice hath so hardned, that there is not so much softness left for the Reason of Truth to take Impression, or to receive that which pertains to Love and good Works, which is one end and product of our Meetings, distinctly and respectively the Men Friends, who discharge their places, to whom the Godly Women always give the Pre-eminence, as Brethren; and Women Friends in their places, not seeking Rule over one another, but that we may be Furtherers of one anothers Joy, and be each others Crown of rejoycing in the Lord, meets in the Fear of the Lord, as in the Light of Christ Jesus in our Consciences, we received, so to walk and do according to the Order of his Spirit, in which Christ is Present in our so meeting together; and the faithful can seal to the Testimony of it, to the Glory of his Name forever.

But wherein doth this great and heavy Imposition on tender Consciences consist? One thing is, say some, *Womens Meetings are imposed: Why do you compel any contrary to their Freedom?* No; all are left to the Measure of Truth in them, which is one and the same in all Consciences; but Informing, Instructing and Exhorting, that every one be found in the Unity of our Duty, according to our Measure of the Light of Christ Jesus, received to walk in it, as Members of his Body to discharge our Office, and Servants in Christs Family to do our Service, as the good Women of old were Helpers in the Work of the Gospel, in such things as are proper to us, as visiting and Relieving the Sick, the Poor more especially and Destitute amongst us, that they be helped, as also the Poor Widdows, and Fatherless Orphans, that the Distressed in all things be rightly answered, the Children at Nurse be rightly educated, and well brought up, in order to a future well-being in the Creation. Again, we being met together, the Elder Women to instruct the Younger to all wholesome things, Loving their own Husbands and Children, to be Discreet, Chaste, Sober, keeping at Home,

Home, that the Word of God we profess be not Blasphemed, &c. with many other Matters pertinent to us, as a Meeting whom the Lord bleſſeth with his Power and Preſence, to ſuſtain and bear us up againſt all our Oppoſers.

Again, *It is Impoſition* (ſaith the Workers of Diſſention) *for Marriages to offer their Intentions to the Conſideration of the Womens Meeting.* But pray conſider, in the Reaſon of Truth, a Marriage hath an equal Concern in the Woman, as in the Man; and 'tis as reaſonable to conſider the Women may have as near a Concern in that matter with the Woman, as the Men on the other Part. And farther 'tis ſaid, *'Tis Impoſition to go more than once to the Brethrens Meeting.* But ſay we, that are in our wholeſome Practices in theſe Matters, and our Conſciences bear us witneſs in the ſight of God, our Eye is to the Honour of his Truth therein, therefore cannot encourage or allow People we are concerned with, to haſten or run together in Marriage, without due Care and Weightineſs, and that we are ſatisfied they are clear in all things touching their Marriage, as they ought to be, and for which end there ought to be a ſpecial care over Young People, to whom the Aged had need to be Examples, both of Gravity and good Order, that Chriſt's Yoke be not caſt off by either, nor any falſe Liberty of the Fleſh ſet up, encouraged or ſoothed among us; wherefore when they have propoſed their Intentions to one Meeting, for them to conſider, 'tis but reaſonable they have time to make Inquiry and Search into the the Matter, ſo as they may be ſatisfied, that all things are ſweet & ſavoury, that ſo far as we can, we may be approved of by all in ſuch publick Affairs. *Yea, But you will have ſuch to come the ſecond time, who are known to be clear.* Yea, 'tis but reaſonable that ſuch ſhould manifeſt their Patience and Subjection, as good Examples to others, in theſe Needful and wholeſome Practices, that are of good Report. And therefore we cannot approve ſuch in their willful Endeavours, to confound the Unity of our Order in this matter, under pretence of a burden to their Conſcience; for it was no burden to come once; for that Meeting in it ſelf being Good, Juſt, Honeſt, and of good Report, answering the Light of Chriſt Jeſus, which is one in all Conſciences, as well in the Ignorant, Blind, Miſ-guided and Erring, becauſe they will not be informed, the Light is the ſame there to reprove and inform, as it is in the Conſcience ruled and guided by the Light: Therefore pray conſider how that can contract a burden,

burden, (*viz.*) the going twice to such a Meeting, as before-mentioned, how it can cause a burden on the Conscience that is rightly informed, though it may be weak, but rather contradicts the Self-will that brings Bondage, and blinds the Consciences: And are not such rather by their opposing Will justly under the Reproof of the Church, and that Endeavours may be, that the Understanding of such be opened, and brought to a better Information in their Consciences? For from the beginning we believe God's Witness in all Consciences is one, and its Reproofs of one Nature and Tendances, and its Instructions tending to one and the same end, and leads all, as they are guided by it, into one Way which allows of no false Liberty. *Yea, but you are gone from the Beginning; for you had not this Way in the Beginning,* say the Opposers. Pray consider, above twenty six Years ago, in the South Parts we were a very little handful of People, gathered into the Belief of the Light of Christ Jesus; so as it is that very Principle of Life in us, that we through Obedience to it might come to know God, as it is Eternal Life to know him, and rightly to worship him in his Spirit, and to be led by him into all Truth, and in Testimony of his own Spirit, in these our Practices, which since the Lord hath called us to, as we are a People called and gathered by the Lord. Pray Consider, I speak the Truth of my Knowledge, and my Conscience beareth me witness in what I have or shall say in this Matter, according to my small Portion and Measure, in the Unity of the Grace received (I give God the Glory, in Humility of Soul before him, for my Preservation to this Day) for pray consider, through the smallness of Number, in the beginning, we were not so capable as now for Order in outward Affairs, nor was there then such occasion as now, but then the Grace of God grew amongst us, and the mighty Arm of his Power was manifested, by which many were gathered to believe in the Light of Jesus Christ, it being that, and no other Name given under Heaven; by which men must be saved. Now in our little measure of Faith, in this One Way, One Name, One Truth, we were as in a threefold Cord of God's Love, joyned together; and as we encreased in Number, then occasion begun of Services, of several kinds, which we were called in the Truth to consider of, which are not so proper here to mention, but this one of Marriage. Before we were or could be gathered into the Order of Men & Wo-

mens Meeting: Upon the weight of the matter, a necessity did appear, that Friends in the Unity of the Spirit and Wisdom of God should consider of a Way wherein this matter might be transacted among our selves, in wholesome Savoury Order, as the Truth might in no wise be Scandalized, but the Testimony of Truth born in it to the World: The most convenient Method then seen, for Truth's sake, was, that Persons declared their Intentions in our publick Meeting; after Friends were satisfied in their Marrying, they took each other in the publick Meeting: But after our Meetings grew more Numerous, and also disorderly Spirits began to get up, which were not subject to the Truth, such would intrude in to our Meetings, to take each other; so then a Necessity in Truth required a further Method, for a more particular and strict Care in this case: In all which we are not gone from the Light and Power of God, and first Principle; but in these and other things we have been in our good Order and Practices, and sweet Fellowship managed by it; and I hope the tender in Conscience will consider, that are impartially Minded, that 'tis no Imposition to inform and perswade the Ignorant and Willful to subject in this or any other matter, that is Honest, Just, Savoury and of good Report, and lawful to conform to, in the Unity of Love to practise, being no other but what is consonant to the Conscience, swayed and regulated by the Light of Jesus Christ, in which is the true Liberty of the Conscience, whether weak or strong: For I hope all will conclude, that if the weak, in their little measure of Light, be kept Conformable to the Truth, that by the Light they cannot be led in their little measure to oppose the strong in their greater measure; and may see further, that 'tis not reasonable in Truth; for the Light cannot contradict it self, and 'tis the same in the strong as in the weak; But 'tis greatly to be lamented at this day, that to any that have known the Lord, and at any time fellowship among his People, the Cross of Christ should become so ineffectual, that such Blindness is happened, that they should put Self-opposing will for a tender Conscience: I do not say, they know it; but whether they do or no, I pray God open their Understandings, and subdue that perverse willful Spirit and cross Selfish humor, that works in opposition to a General Good and Peaceable Subjection amongst the People of the Lord and Church of Christ. Surely these

I hope is the main thing of which the Lord is concerned and I pray

these, though they may cry, *Liberty of Conscience*, and pretend for tender Consciences too, yet they are not fit Subjects for that Liberty that Christ redeems to, and sets free in, to serve him with a Conscience purged from Dead Works; nay, they that set themselves, in their wilful prejudiced Opposition, against our Peaceable practising in the Church of God; *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things pertain to Love, whatsoever things are of good report*, Phil. 4. 8. In which the God of Peace is with us now; that which is opposing our Unity therein, would affright the simple Ones with amazing expressions of Imposition, &c. on weak Consciences, and going from the Spirit of Life and Power into the Form; but blessed be the Lord that we have kept our Habitation in the Power, and held our Unity in that Spirit that gives us Life, thereby to live to God, and not to our selves, to serve him in that Form of Godliness, which the Power hath brought forth amongst us, to live in the Unity of, and in his Spirit, the Foundation of our Preservation, in Peace and Consolation to this very day; and the Faith of such remains firm in God's everlasting Power, even as we received in the beginning of the breaking forth of the Day of the Lord, in which his ancient Arm and excellent Everlasting Name was revealed, which is above every Name, into which a Number was gathered to believe and meet in, and the Lord was there, and is to this very day in the midst of them, as Thousands, and ten Thousands can speak to the Testimony of it; Oh, Glory, Obedience, and everlasting Dominion be ascribed to his honourable and everlasting Name over all forever; For the Kingdom of our God and his Christ, on whose Shoulders the Government is laid, shall prevail through all Clouds of opposition, and Mists of thick Darkness, that have risen out of a misguided understanding, through a Prejudiced mind, even to ensnare the weak and simple, and deceive the unstable Soul, drawing from our *Christian* Unity, which is purely held in the Spirit.

And so, inasmuch as the Envious Worker is suffered to proceed, that would even raze out the Foundation of Christ's Kingdom and Government, under which his Subjects do only own their *Christian* Freedom and true Liberty of Conscience; and whatsoever may be insinuated to the contrary, by the Enemy of our Souls Well-fare

in the particular, and the Churches Peace in the general, which God may suffer, it is for the Tryal of our Patience, and Manifestation and Confirmation of our Faith and Love one to another, and that it is in the Election in Christ Jesus which cannot be deceived, whereby we are strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might is our confidence, that all shall work together for good to the Called, Chosen and Faithful, according to his purpose in Christ, and effectual working of his Grace; And that the Lord in his Power and due time, will arise to clear the Innocency of his People, and Confound and lay Waste all that which works in Opposition to the Prosperity and Unity of his Truth, and peaceable Government of Christ in his Church, which is formed in the Power of God.

So all Glory we ascribe to the one pure Power, in which we believed in the beginning, as the Foundation of Christ's Government and Kingdom that shall never have end.

Anne Whitehead.

A true Information of our blessed *Womens Meeting* (For we are blessed, and the Lord hath blessed us, praised be that Everlasting Arm of Power, that gathered us in the beginning to be a Meeting) betwixt 3 or 4 and twenty Years ago.

THUS it was, after the Word of eternal Life and Salvation, and Light of Christ Jesus in the Conscience, had been Preached in this City, for some time, many there were that received the Report, and was Convinced of it, many Poor as well as Rich; and oft times Sickness and Weakness came upon many Poor Ones, and

many Distressed and troubled in mind, when the Judgments of the Lord were upon them; and they would oftentimes desire the Servants of the Lord to come unto them, such that had a Word in season to speak to them: And our dear Friend *George Fox*, that man of God, for so he is, the Lord has made him a Blessing in his Hand to many, praised be the Lord forever, he was many times sent for to many that were Sick and Weak in this City, and when he came to behold their want of things needful for them, some scarcely Clothes to cover them, or Food to eat, or any one to look to them in their Distresses and Wants: The consideration of it was weighty upon him, and he was moved of the Lord to advise to a **Womans Meeting**; and in order thereunto, he sent for such Women as he knew in this City; of which there are many living to this day, that can testify to the same, who keep the Meeting in the Faith of that Power that gathered us together; Blessed be the Lord forever who makes willing, and gives strength to answer his Requirings in all things. And when dear *G. Fox* declared unto us what the Lord had made known unto him by his Power, That there should be a **Womans Meeting**, that so all the Sick, the Weak, the Widdows and the Fatherless, should be minded and looked after in their Distresses, that so there should be no Want amongst the Lords People, but that all Distressed ones should be minded and looked after: I can truly say, we had an answer of God in our Hearts to his Testimony, and my Soul was refreshed at that time, and my Heart tendred, with many more of my Sisters, in the sensible feeling of that everlasting Life and Power of the Lord, and his Universal Love that had moved in his dear Servant, to call us to this Work; and we joyned with him in the Power of God in it: and so we appointed a Meeting, and after we had met for some time, we considered which way we should answer the Necessities; and it arose in the Hearts of some Friends, *That we should have a conveniency, that so all the Faithful might offer as unto the Lord, not knowing what one another offers; that so from him they might expect their Reward;* and it was concluded upon accordingly by the Meeting. And these were found among us some that were unworthy, that we could not relieve out of that which was provided for the Faithful; and yet they were such that frequented our publick Meetings, and looked unto us for Charity; and we could not send them empty away; So we considered

considered; and had a Weekly Gathering for them, that it might be fulfilled, as it is written, *Do good unto all; but especially to the Household of Faith.* And after some time of our meeting together, there came two of the Brethren from the Mens Meeting to us, when we were met together, expressing their Unity with us, and also did declare the mind of the Mens Meeting, (viz.) *That they would be ready to help and assist us in any thing we should desire of them for Truth's Service:* And so in some time it was agreed upon, in the Unity of the Truth, that the Men Friends should pay the Poor Friends Rents, and find them Coles, (such as we Relieve, that were faithful) and put out such poor Friends Children, as we should offer to them; And this has been done almost from the beginning of our Meeting to this Day; besides many other Services that fall in by the way, that cannot be omitted by us: And thus the Work of the Lord has been carried on and prospered by the Arm of his everlasting Power, *Magnified be his Name forever, who has found us worthy, and made us willing to answer whatsoever he requireth of us, according to the measure received of him.* And this I do declare, that it was the same everlasting quickning Power that first visited us by the Spirit of Judgment and of Burning, and wrought in our inward parts mightily, even as the little Leaven in the three Measures of Meal, to purifie and to cleanse, to purge out and put under all that was contrary to the Lord, and to make us Habitations fit to do his Will, that gathered us and made us a Meeting, and the same has been with us to this very day, blessed and magnified be his Name forever.

And I have a Word in my Heart to say unto you all *Back-sliders, Obstructors, Opposers* (& such as countenance them secretly) of this our heavenly Order of Men and Womens Meetings, which the Lord by his Power has set up, and hath given Wisdom according to true Knowledge, to act in the Church of Christ: you that have despised Dignities; and speak Evil of the Servants of the Lord, such that faithfully have laboured amongst us from the beginning, which the Lord hath found worthy of double Honour, giving some of them odd Names; Alas poor People! what will become of you, except you Repent? Consider and see, whether some of you could not once have plucked out your Eyes to have done them good? Oh what is the matter now! Has not the Serpent deceived you, and made

made you to eat of the forbidden Fruit, and let in the Spirit of Enmity that sows Dissention, and makes Division in the Heritage of God; I do say, the Lord's Controversie is with you, and your End will be Miserable, except you come to Repentance; which my Soul hath often desired for you: For I do well know, and the Lord hath sealed it upon my Heart, That that Spirit which hath opposed the blessed Unity and Order of Truth, in these our Men and Womans Meetings, shall never prosper, nor they who are in it, inwardly to God, without Repentance; although outwardly they may make never so great a shew with high Words and Notions. But saith the opposing Spirit, *We are not against your Meetings in London; but we have no such need in the Countries.* Doubtless Christ's Churches in the Countries are one and the same as in the Cities; of which he is Head of his Churches there as in London; and surely his Members have the same Office and Service in kind and quality, although it may be not so much in quantity, which is reasonable for the Impartial minded to consider.

And now, my Dear Friends and Sisters, in the blessed Truth of our God, you that have kept this our Meeting for many Years, and some of you from the first Day the Lord gathered us together, and made us a Meeting, I do believe that you with me can truly say, *That we have felt the drawings of the Father's Love from time to time to this our Meeting, and his Blessing is amongst us;* Inasmuch as we, dared not to suffer any of our own Occasions to hinder us from this our Service, to which the Lord hath called us, but many times have pressed through the croud of much Business; and many things that would have hindered, but we dared not to give way unto it, but in faithfulness answer the Lord's Requirings: The Lord hath been with us of a truth from time to time, his Living Powerful Presence has been truly witnessed amongst us, to the refreshing of our immortal Souls; which is a true Confirmation to us, that the Lord owns us in this our Service. And I can truly say, I had true Breathings to the Lord in the behalf of our younger Women, as they come to be settled in the World amongst us, that they may be affected with the Work and Service of our Meeting as truly as we have been, and are to this day, and that they may be Heirs of the Grace of God with us. And this I can truly say, I have felt the zeal of the Lord to arise in my Heart, sometimes in a Meeting, and some-
times

times upon my Bed against this wicked Spirit, that hath sought to lay waste and bring to nought our blessed Meeting and heavenly Society and Order, which hath been set up amongst us; and a true sence hath been upon me of our dear Friends up and down the Nation, of their great Tryal and Exercise that hath been upon them, because of this wicked dividing Spirit, and especially in my Native Country (viz.) *Wiltshire*: And this was the first moving cause in the Power of God in my Heart, to cast in my Mite as my Testimony to that everlasting Universal blessed Power, which the Lord hath made me a living Witness of, according to my measure: And this I can say, the more Opposition we have had against our Womens Meeting, the more we have increased in the Power of the Lord, and he hath blessed our Endeavours and Services; and therefore *Friends*, be not discouraged, but go on in the Work and Service of the Lord in his Power, to his Glory, who hath honoured his Daughters of *Abraham* and *Sion*, in his heavenly Work; and therefore we cannot but serve the Lord in our Generation, and be Valiant for his Truth upon Earth, and our desires are, that all our fellow Sisters in the Lords Truth may do the same every where throughout the whole Earth, where the Lord hath gathered them, so that all may live to the Praise and Glory of God, *Amen*.

And though we are Absent in the Body, yet Present in Spirit with all the Faithful, with the Spirit joying and beholding your spiritual Order in the Spirit, and steadfastness of your Faith in Christ Jesus, the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, in whom our Peace and Rest is.

Mary Elson.

THE END.

A Tender and Christian Testimony to young People, and others, whom it may concern in this present Day.

FRIENDS,

WE, having a Weight on our Spirits, and godly Care on our Minds, and a holy Jealousy, in Respect to the Honour and Prosperity of the blessed Truth, you and we walk under the Profession of, find a Necessity thus to remind you, and to stir up one another to our Exercise, in the Light of *Christ Jesus*, which first convinced us of Sin and Evil, shewing us, that to be the Way and the Truth, that leads out of all Defilements, both of Flesh and Spirit, into the Life of Holiness and Righteousness, in the whole Course of our Conversation; so that to the World, and all that are without, our Lives may speak, that the Grace, that hath appeared to all, we have received; for, by the effectual Work of it, we deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, *The Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life*, which are of the evil One; and, by this, that first convinced us, this Principle of Light and Spirit of Grace, we are led to live *godly, soberly, and righteously, in this present evil World*, in which the-Temptations are.

Now, Friends, we, looking back to the Purity we beheld in the first breaking forth of the Light of *Christ* among us, it is not less beautiful in itself, but more to us through the clearer Shinings of it, in the Mystery of the Cross of *Christ Jesus*, which is Foolishness to the World; but, to us that believe in it, the Power of God for Salvation, out of the Pollutions of the World, that enter through the lusting Eye, or Flesh, or Pride of Life, which our fervent Breathings are to God, that we may be preserved from turning back into again, looking to our first Steps in Truth's Way. Oh! the Strength we were one to another through our Unity; each watching for the other's Good, as well as our own, fearing to draw one another from the Stay of our Minds, did not forget the Bridle to the Tongue, through unprofitable talking, whispering, or evil speaking one of another behind the Back; but, if any Thing did lie upon one, to inform, exhort, and reprove one another, that we did in an holy awe, as became them that walked in the Light, to the Particular's Face concerned.

Moreover, consider the Comeliness of that Plainness, that at the first the Truth led us to, by which we were distinguished from other Professors and People of the World, who, if we were then reproached for it, it was for Truth's Sake, which the upright minded to God valued above all the vain Glory of the World; and with such do you consider, that wear the gay Cloathing, which speaks not the Weight and Gravity of Truth, the costly Array, and so much Conform to the Fashions of the World, yet walk under the Profession of Truth with us, in the Fear and Love of God; we beseech you, as Children, retire to the Light of *Christ* in you, and there feel our Burden for you, and the Reproach and Dishonour of the precious Truth by you, whilst the World saith, *The Quakers are now like us, they want only Lace and Ribbands*. Our End is not to upbraid any; but to remind you how our religious Profession is upbraided; for with the Light you will see there may be, and is, Superfluity in Habit, although no Lace and Ribbands; neither would we have you provoked, but to the Love of the Light of *Christ* in you; because *they that love the Light bring their Deeds to be manifested by the Light, and receive the Reproofs and Instructions of it, for they are the Way to Life*. Now this we do injoin upon you, and are seeking for you, even that the holy Principle of Truth may take Place in you, so as to season you in all good Manners of Life and Conversation, as those that profess Godliness.

Remember what the Apostle saith in *1 Tim. Let the Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, and with Sobriety, and not with broidered Hair, Gold, or costly Array*. And, in *Peter*, read, how the godly Womens Adorning was to be inward, *not in putting on Apparel, &c.* Now having known a Mortification, through the Cross of *Christ*, and, in this, as well as other Things, denied ourselves, and put off these Things we had Liberty in before we professed the Truth, to such it is now strange to see what some put on, so much more costly, and far exceeding whatever they wore, before they came to profess the Truth; and, indeed, unsuitable to Truth's Gravity and Christian Society; as if that, which crucifies to the World, and leads to Self-Denial, were forgotten. The Lord help to stop these Things that hinder the Work of God, and stop that holy Progress in the Life of Truth.

Furthermore, we cannot but remind here among us *young People*, that have little in the World, yet deck themselves as if they had great Matters, and thereby draw out the Mind, one after another, into high Expectations: In this Circumstance there is often a Fallacy and Deceit, and the End of it proves of a bad Effect, by Disappointment; but, at best, this bespeaks not the Modesty, Sincerity, or Weight of Truth. Now, pray Friends, bear with us; for it is the Truth of God, which is most precious, both in Faith and Life, which is our Concern herein, and that the Cross of *Christ*, in which the Sum of Christianity consists, may not be made void, and our holy Profession may not be scandalized by Things unbecoming Truth and us, in which a false Liberty is creeping up, to the Hurt and Hindrance of Truth's Prosperity; but, in the Light, all is discerned, and Strength ministered to withstand: therefore our Testimony is to elder and younger, that in all Things we all may keep the Touch-Stone, and Guidance of the holy Principle that first convinced us. And you, the younger Friends, be not as those that are grown beyond Reproof, but esteem of them that are before you in the Truth, as the elder Women that are in our Duty, which is, *to teach the younger in all good Things*, and also to reprove and admonish concerning *evil Things*, that the elder and younger may walk in Truth in all Things harmless and blameless. Let us all mind that which keeps us in Humility, Fear, and godly Sincerity; and those that are Mothers of Children, in all holy Circumspection to watch over them, that the Vanity of the Mind may not be encouraged, but curbed and kept down. And those Servants that profess the Truth, which will not be subject in their Places, in those Things that are wholesome, honest, and just, but take Liberty as they will, being stubborn and perverse, not answering the blessed Principle of Truth, so becoming a Stumbling to them without, an ill Example to our Children and Families within, a sore Disorder, and grievous Burden, that many bear by them; but, such Servants we exhort to fear the Lord, and take heed how they persist in going contrary to the holy Truth they profess; but turn into the Measure of God's Spirit of Grace, and, by the